(d) The visit would provide the two sides the opportunity to further strengthen their shared commitment to build a more meaningful and mutually beneficial relationship between India and the United States.

Re-occupation of Sapru House

2633. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the former President of the Indian Council of World Affairs alongwith his supporters tried to re-occupy Sapru House in April, 2001;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any FIR was lodged with the police by the Ministry in this regard;

(d) if so, the present legal position of the Sapru House Complex and the Status of the Former President *vis-a-vis* ICWA; and

(e) the steps taken to prevent trespassing of ICWA premises in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (c) and (e) Shri Harcharan Singh Josh, the ex-President of the erstwhile Indian Council of World Affairs, alongwith a few other of his followers, entered the Sapru House premises at around 12.45 pm. on 4.4.2001, took over the keys from the Chowkidar on duty and occupied the room adjacent to that of the Director General in full glare of the media, who had been reportedly called by Shri Josh in advance to cover the incident. An FIR for criminal trespass was immediately lodged by the Director General of the Indian Council of World Affairs with the Tilak Marg Police Station, New Delhi. With the help of the police and after a six hour stand-off, Shri Josh and others were evicted peacefully from the premises by the evening. After the incident, security guards from a private agency have been appointed for round-the-clock vigil at the main gates. The ICWA chowkidars have been advised to be more vigilant. The local police authorities have also been requested to provide adequate protection.

(d) The present legal status of Sapru House Complex is governed by the Sub Section 5 (i) (a) (reproduced below) of the Indian Council of World Affairs (Second) Ordinance, 2001 (No. 3 of 2001) promulgated on 8th May, 2001;

"5.(1) On and from the appointed day,—

(a) all properties and other assets vested in the existing Council immediately before that day, shall vest in the Council;"

In view of Sub-Section 7(i)(a) of the same Ordinance which specifies that the Union Minister of External Affairs shall be the President of the Council, *ex-officio,* Shri Josh has no *locus standi* in the Council.